

AOT In Action - Issue 277 - August 17, 2009



Phoenix skyline

Message from Director Sherry Henry

Good afternoon,

Perception is everything—and the perception that meetings and conventions held at resort destinations are an irresponsible use of tax payers money is causing widespread, in some cases irreversible, damage to the tourism and travel industry in Arizona. In fact, the hotel and lodging industry estimates that cancelled and downsized meetings, due to this negative perception, have resulted in more than **\$100 million** in lost revenues and more than **\$11 million** in lost tax revenues from hotels alone. That is an incredible economic loss and affects more than just the hotel and lodging industry. It affects all industries connected to travel and tourism.

Several months ago, there were reports of various corporations abusing the funding they received from the federal government's Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) and using the money to pay for extravagant holiday parties or entertainment events. This was extensively covered in the media causing the federal government to investigate and take action against these few businesses for reckless spending. The federal government should be congratulated for this action; however the media coverage from this situation has caused a tremendous misunderstanding about the *real* purpose and economic benefits of meetings and conventions. Some legitimate meetings were even portrayed as frivolous in nature instead of for what they were--opportunities for professional development.

To help combat this negative perception from causing any more harm to our industry that is challenged enough from the down economy, the H1N1 virus and other hot-button topics such as issues surrounding the U.S./Mexico border, AOT has joined the [Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association](#) and other industry leaders from across the valley in conducting meetings with members of the local media. The goal of these meetings is to help the media gain a better understanding of the immense economic benefits to hosting meetings and conventions in Arizona.

Additionally, in September, AOT will once again join a delegation of industry leaders from our state to attend the U.S Travel Association's [Travel Leadership Summit](#) in Washington D.C. This summit is a great opportunity to advocate for our industry and help legislators and media

understand the value of meetings and conventions to the local, state and federal economies.

Look to future *AOT in Actions* for updates about what we accomplished at [Travel Leadership Summit](#).

Have a great week.

AOT News

Don't Forget to Keep Posting Your Summer Travel Deals!

AOT, in partnership with the Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association and statewide industry partners, launched our new summer campaign which will run through September. The campaign will showcase the amazing summer travel deals found throughout Arizona. If you want your travel deal promoted, this is your chance! Upload your travel deals and packages to the Travel Deals section of www.azot.gov. There is no charge to list a package on the Travel Deals section.

If you are experiencing issues with uploading your travel deals or have any questions about the process, please contact Johnny Muongpack at 602-364-3710 or via e-mail at amuongpack@azot.gov.

AOT Events

Sign up for the 12th Annual Arizona Showcase in Hermosillo!

The Arizona Office of Tourism will hold the 12th Annual Arizona Showcase October 8, 2009 in Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico. This event promotes fall and holiday shopping, attractions and accommodations throughout the State. The highlight event will be a charity fashion show with local models - specifically targeting high income families and individuals with a strong propensity to travel. The cost to participate varies from \$900 - \$2,500 depending on type of supplier and level of participation, plus travel expenses. The deadline to participate is September 1, 2009. Please contact Kristy Swanson at 602-364-3696 or via e-mail at kswanson@azot.gov.

Upcoming Events & Activities

[Mexico Sales Mission](#)

Dates: August 31 - September 4

Location: Morelia, San Luis Potosi, Aguascalientes and Zacatecas

[Allegiant Airlines Sales Mission](#)

Date: September 7-11

Location: Bend, Eugene and Medford, Oregon

[New York Media Marketplace](#)

Date: September 10

Location: New York, New York

Industry News

New Survey Finds Americans Have “Vacation Deficit”

A new survey sponsored by Access America finds that the U.S. is in the throes of a serious "vacation deficit." >> [Read Full Article](#)

Congratulations to the Stables Ranch Grille for Earning the Coveted Wine Spectator Award!

Stables Ranch Grille at historic Tubac Golf Resort is the first Arizona restaurant south of Tucson to earn the coveted Wine Spectator Restaurant Award for having one of the best wine lists in the world. >> [Read Full Article](#)

New Survey Shows rise in Travel Intentions by Americans

The travel intentions of U.S. adults appear to be on the rise, according to the latest travelhorizons survey, which is co-authored quarterly by Ypartnership and the U.S. Travel Association. >> [Read Full Article](#)

Global Entry Program Expanding

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection on Tuesday announced the expansion of the Global Entry pilot program to 13 additional airports, bringing the total to 20. >> [Read Full Article](#)

Airlines Set to Ask More of Passengers

U.S. airlines on Saturday will begin asking travelers to provide their birth date and sex for the first time under a new aviation security requirement, federal officials said Wednesday. >> [Read Full Article](#)

Hotel Industry Suffers Another Bad Week

Last week was another ghastly one for the hotel industry, researchers said Thursday, with occupancy and revenue again down substantially compared with a year earlier. >> [Read Full Article](#)

Southwest Loses Bid for Frontier

Republic Airways won an auction to acquire bankrupt Frontier Airlines over discount carrier Southwest Airlines, the carriers said Thursday. >> [Read Full Article](#)

Study: Travelers Find Hotel Web Sites Lacking

Many multi-brand hotel companies are failing to properly package information on their Web site to encourage bookings by business travelers, according to second-quarter hotel company Web site satisfaction scores in a report released this week by New York research firm Iperceptions. >> [Read Full Article](#)

Mobil Travel Guide to Become Forbes Travel Guide

Beginning in October, the Mobil Travel Guide brand will become the Forbes Travel Guide. >> [Read Full Article](#)

Calendar of Events

Visit www.ArizonaGuide.com to find information on all the exciting events, festivals and activities held throughout the Grand Canyon State!

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